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***Employee
Assistance
Service***

A Supervisory Guide

Employee Assistance

What is the Employee Assistance Service?

The Employee Assistance Service, or E.A.S., is a confidential resource for all employees of the University. The professionally trained E.A.S. staff provides counseling and referral assistance to employees who are experiencing some form of personal distress which is resulting in the deterioration of the employee's job performance.

Why does the University of Illinois have an E.A.S.?

The E.A.S. represents a commitment by the University of Illinois to the overall "wellness" of its employees. This commitment presumes that employees will want to help themselves overcome personal difficulties which may contribute to poor work performance. By relying on a positive approach as an immediate alternative to disciplinary action, the University can help its employees in an area which falls outside the boundaries of traditional health care benefits. The University is attempting to build a high quality community of workers by stimulating productivity in an atmosphere of positive relationships between supervisors, managers and employees.

How does an employee get help from E.A.S.?

An employee may come to the E.A.S. at his or her own initiative, or he or she may be referred by supervisors, managers, or union officials. E.A.S. may be able to help solve an employee's problem before difficulties in the workplace become chronic.

The contact between the E.A.S. and the employee is kept *confidential* and will have absolutely no effect on the individual's employment status with the University.

What services does the E.A.S. provide?

After an initial contact with the E.A.S., which may be made by the employee or by his or her supervisor, a professionally trained E.A.S. counselor will arrange to interview the employee. The counselor works in concert with the employee to assess the employee's problem and to map out a plan of action. E.A.S. attempts to connect the employee with a means of solving his or her problem as a part of this plan of action. E.A.S. will then follow up not only with the employee, but also with the service to which the employee was referred, to assess the usefulness of the plan. If the initial contact was made by a department head, supervisor, or union official, the E.A.S. will contact the department to inform the department of the

employee's compliance with the referral. After planning is completed, and if the employee agrees, there will then be a meeting with all concerned parties to establish roles and open lines of communication. E.A.S. is pleased to receive feedback regarding any improvement or lack of improvement in the employee's job performance.

This process of assessment, planning, and follow-up can be used to successfully deal with problems such as:

- Marital or family problems
- Job stress
- Emotional stress or depression
- Credit counseling, budget emergencies, financial planning
- Child care problems
- Alcohol and drug dependencies
- Legal difficulties
- Psychological counseling

Who should get help from E.A.S.?

An employee should be considered for referral to the E.A.S. if the following trends are evident:

Deteriorating job performance characterized by:

- Excessive sick time
- Missed deadlines
- Frequent lateness
- Excessive absenteeism

Changes in attitude toward increased:

- Hostility
- Withdrawal
- Dependency

Any sudden or unexplained change for the worse in the performance or attitude of a usually effective employee may indicate the presence of a problem which the E.A.S. may be able to help solve.

How should a supervisor use the E.A.S.?

A supervisor may, before using the E.A.S., meet with the employee who is having a job performance problem to establish the level of job performance expected of the employee. The supervisor should make a record of all data which relates to the individual's poor job performance. In this meeting the supervisor should attempt to be consistent and should avoid an atmosphere of confrontation as much as possible.

If the problem persists after this initial meeting and the supervisor wishes to refer the employee to E.A.S., the supervisor should meet again with the employee. During this meeting the supervisor should:

1. Suggest that the employee contact the E.A.S.
2. Briefly explain our program and your feeling that the E.A.S. may be able to help.
3. Give the employee the E.A.S. telephone number and ask him or her to call for an appointment.
4. After your meeting with the employee, call the E.A.S. to inform us of the referral.
5. If the employee refuses the referral you should advise him or her that the normal disciplinary process will now be the only recourse if job performance does not improve.

During this meeting with the employee the supervisor may expect to encounter resistance, defensiveness, or hostility. To avoid having the meeting disintegrate into a clash of personalities in a situation like this the supervisor should follow these general guidelines:

- Avoid diagnosing or referring to the employee's problems beyond their impact on the employee's job performance.
- Try to limit discussion to issues of job performance rather than issues of personality or other types of conflict.
- Re-establish job performance standards
- Avoid making any "special allowances" for the employee. Don't let the employee intimidate you into "bending" the rules.

After you notify the E.A.S. of the referral, we will confirm to you that the employee is following through with the referral.

Are there fees for using the E.A.S.?

No. The E.A.S. is free to all University employees.

Does the E.A.S. offer any other services?

The E.A.S. is also glad to serve in a consulting role in cases where specific problems arise with dissatisfied or troubled employees. The counselors at E.A.S. are professionally trained to handle these types of problem work relationships and will be glad to consult with you either over the phone or in person. E.A.S. will help you assess the various alternatives for dealing with difficult situations. This service is also offered free of charge to all supervisors, managers, and department heads.

To refer an employee or to ask for assistance or consultation on a work related problem involving you or those under your supervision, or to receive more information about E.A.S. please call us at

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CONSIDER E.A.S. IN CASES OF:

- Declining job performance
- Deteriorating work relationships

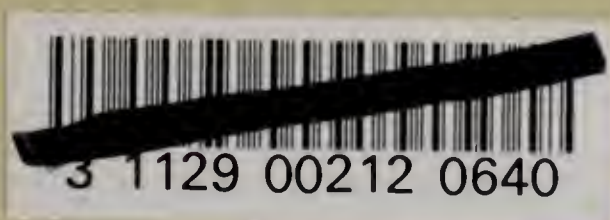
USE E.A.S. BY:

- Briefly explaining the program
- Suggesting that the employee call for an appointment
- Calling E.A.S. to inform us about the referral

E.A.S. WILL THEN:

- Assess the nature of the problem
- Plan with the employee to help alleviate the problem
- Follow up with the department, the employee, and with the caregiver to insure the quality and usefulness of services (follow up is done only with the employee's permission)
- Consult with the departments on potential uses of E.A.S.

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